

HAMBLEN COUNTY COMMISSION

Public Comment Guidelines for Commission Meeting

1. Everyone attending the meeting will refrain from private conversations while the Hamblen County Commission (hereinafter referred to as “the County Commission”) is in session and cell phones shall be set to silent.
2. Citizens and visitors attending the county commission meetings are expected to act respectfully. Any person making personal, impertinent, profane or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous while addressing the County Commission or while attending the meeting shall be removed from the room if so directed by the Commission Chairman. The person shall be barred from further audience before the County Commission during that meeting. If the Commission Chairman fails to act, any member of the County Commission may move to require enforcement of the rules, and the affirmative vote of a majority of the County Commission shall require the presiding officer to act.
3. The Commission Chairman shall not allow disruptive comments and remarks from the audience, stamping of feet, whistles, yells, and similar demonstrations. The person guilty of such conduct may be removed from the room. In case the Commission Chairman shall fail to act, any member of the County Commission may move to require enforcement of the rules and the affirmative vote of the majority of the County Commission shall require the presiding officer to act.
4. No placards, banners, or signs will be permitted in the County Commission meeting room or in any other room in which the County Commission is meeting. Exhibits, displays, and visual aids used in connection with presentations, however, are permitted.
5. Cameras, video equipment, and other recording devices shall be restricted to a designated area of the meeting room and shall not be allowed to interfere with the conduct of the meeting or hamper the ability of the audience to observe and participate in the meeting. The Commission Chairman shall require that such equipment be operated within these guidelines or have the equipment removed from the meeting room.

Members of the audience may speak during this section of the agenda subject to the following guidelines:

- A person wishing to address the County Commission regarding items on the agenda can do so during the **“Public Comment Regarding Business of the Agenda Only”** section of the agenda.
- A person wishing to address the County Commission regarding items **NOT** on the agenda can do so during the **“Public Comment – General”** section of the agenda.
- A person wishing to address the County Commission must first be recognized by the Commission Chairman.
- The speaker must provide his/her name and address for the minutes.
- Speakers at a commission meeting must address their comments to the Commission Chairman rather than to individual members of the County Commission or staff.
- Each speaker will be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to address the County Commission. A majority vote of the County Commission will be required to extend the time limit. The County Commission may impose more restrictive time limits if a large number of persons desire to speak. If a large number of speakers are present to address an issue, the County Commission may set a limit on the total time allowed for all speakers or ask that a Spokesperson be named to speak on behalf of the group.
- A person desiring more than three (3) minutes to address the County Commission can be given permission for five (5) minutes by properly completing and submitting a “Request to Appear Before Commission” form. Forms are available in the Mayor’s office at the Hamblen County Courthouse. The deadline to submit a completed form is the Monday before the upcoming County Commission meeting. The request will be reviewed for approval by the Commission Chairman. Anyone satisfactorily completing the form will receive five (5) minutes to address the County Commission during the appropriate designated public comment section. Some issues may not be appropriate for public discussion (e.g. pending legal matter of those covered by Privacy Acts).
- The County Commission will not discuss or consider any item addressed during the “Public Comment – General” section. Issues raised may be referred to staff for response at a later date or may be scheduled for discussion by Commission at a later time.

These guidelines should be made available to the audience prior to the meeting.